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## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

### **PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION**

**1. Project Title:** Mission Valley Shooting Club

**2. Type of Proposed Action:**

The Mission Valley Shooting Club (MVSC) proposes to improve the handicap-accessibility, convenience, safety, parking, environmental protection, and roads by:

- Adding additional safety berms.
- Increasing the height and repairing existing berms where bullet erosion has occurred.
- Constructing a handicap-access parking lot and ramps at the Rimfire Range.
- Add additional target stands and three shooting benches at the 22 Rimfire Range.
- Extend the meeting room at the 22 Rimfire Range house.



**Figure 1 – Aerial view of MVSC Range, Ronan, Montana**

### **3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:**

The Mission Valley Shooting Club Shooting Range is located approximately three miles west of Ronan, Montana, on Leighton Road; Section 33, Township 21 North, Range 20 West.

**4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

- (a)(i) Shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;*
  - (ii) May not limit the number of members;*
  - (iii) May charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and*
  - (iv) Shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or*
- (b) Shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

### **5. Need for the Action(s):**

Currently, the meeting room at the Rimfire Range house is inadequate to facilitate more students for Hunter Education Field Days and monthly 22 Youth Shoots. There are insufficient target stands and shooting benches at the Rimfire Range to meet the demand. The existing parking lot, target stands, and ramps at the Rimfire Range are not ADA-compliant. A safety berm needs to be built at the Rimfire Range to increase the number of target spaces and to prevent lead bullets from reaching the creek. Some of the safety berms need to be heightened and repaired. The proposed projects will contribute to the long-term convenience, safety, and usefulness of the facility for the club members, the local community, and the general public.

### **6. Objectives for the Action(s):**

The goal of the proposed project on the MVSC Range is to improve the safety, handicap-accessibility, convenience, environmental protection, roads, parking, and shooting opportunities of the MVSC Range.

### **7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:**

The proposed project would involve less than five acres of the 20-acre MVSC Range.

### **8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):**

The 20-acre MVSC Range is located on private land leased to the MVSC. The property is located within a floodplain and a perennial stream flows through the property. Safety berms are currently located between shooting ranges and the stream to prevent projectiles from reaching the stream. As part of the proposed project, an additional berm will be built at the Rimfire Range to further protect the stream from bullets entering the water. The range offers shooting opportunities for rifle, pistol, shotgun, archery, cowboy action, long-range rifle, and black powder.

**9. Description of Project:**

The proposed project will: 1) build a handicap-accessible parking lot and ramps at the Rimfire Range; 2) protect the stream from bullets and other projectiles reaching the water; 3) protect neighboring properties from stray bullets; 4) increase the number of target spaces at the Rimfire Range; 5) expand the size of the Rimfire Range house meeting room and add additional target stands; 6) improve safety by raising, repairing, and rebuilding safety berms; and 7) improve the parking area and road.

1.	Earth Work	\$ 4,125
2.	Administration	\$ 1,030
3.	Construction Materials	\$ 22,476
4.	Donated Labor and Equipment	<u>\$ 25,198</u>
1.	Total Project Budget	\$ 52,829
2.	Total Funding Requested from FWP	\$ 25,000

**10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**

None

**Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

**Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$25,000

**11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:**

The MVSC Range is a non-profit private range with an annual membership fee of \$35. The range is open to visitors for a day-use fee and at no charge during organized matches and public sight-in days. Members are welcome to bring guests at no charge. Several organizations use the range each year, including the Mission Valley Shooting Club, FWP Hunter Education, Cowboy Shoot Group, Tribal Police and Tribal Game Wardens, Lake County 4-H Shooting Sports, St. Ignatius Police Department. Approximately 16 events are held at the MVSC Range each year, including youth shooting events, Centerfire Varmint Shoots, IBS Format Centerfire Shoots, and gun safety classes.

**12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:**

Because the MVSC is a non-profit, private shooting club for members, there has been no public involvement in the planning process. Proposed range development proposals have been discussed with the club members and the associated project vendors and contractors.

**13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**14. Names, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**

Tom Fieber, 808 7th Street East, Polson, MT 59860. (406) 250-3386.

**15. Other Pertinent Information:**

The MVSC Range is a private, nonprofit shooting range. The closest shooting range providing similar shooting opportunities is located in Ronan, Montana 15 miles from the MVSC Range.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: March 16, 2016.

## **PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES**

**Alternative A, the Proposed Alternative, and Alternative B, the No Action Alternative, were considered.**

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project): to improve the safety, handicap-accessibility, convenience, environmental protection, parking, road, and shooting opportunities of the MVSC Range. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative**.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without the proposed improvements. The no action alternative would have no significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. The range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

**Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:** Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

### **Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:**

None. Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There was no other alternative that were deemed reasonably available, or prudent. Neither the **Proposed Alternative** nor the **No Action Alternative** would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

**List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations):** None

## **PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmentally sensitive areas.

**Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.**

<b>Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Can Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comments Below</b>
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover,						

<b>Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Can Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comments Below</b>
quantity & quality				X		#4
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		#7
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		#8
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		#11

**2. & 5.** There are no delineated wetlands and no natural water sources within the area proposed for development. The stream is protected from projectiles entering the water by safety berms and an additional safety berm will be constructed as part of the proposed project. No critical wildlife habitat would be affected. Any resident or transient wildlife may temporarily leave the immediate area during construction of the proposed project but would return upon completion of construction.

**4.** The construction of the proposed project will not change the overall abundance and diversity of plant species within the area. Due to prior land use, native vegetation has been disturbed in the area of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project will have a minor impact on native vegetation in the area.

**7.** The proposed project will cause limited displacement of soils but the developments will not substantially effect geological features or establish new erosion patterns. Soil disruption for this site is localized. Erosion control measures will be in effect and disturbed area will be reseeded.

**8.** Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created by construction equipment during construction. However, the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population near the property.

**9.** This project uses no federal funds nor does it take place on state owned or controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply.

**11.** The property is already used as a shooting range so the proposed project will have no additional impact on the aesthetics of the property.

**Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.**

<b>Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Can Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comments Below</b>
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				<b>X</b>		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				<b>X</b>		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				<b>X</b>		
4. Agricultural production				<b>X</b>		
5. Human health				<b>X</b>		<b>#5</b>
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				<b>X</b>		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				<b>X</b>		<b>#7</b>
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				<b>X</b>		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				<b>X</b>		
10. Demands for government services				<b>X</b>		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				<b>X</b>		

5. The proposed projects would improve the safety for members and the public using the range.

7. The proposed developments will increase shooting opportunities within the community.

#### **PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range or altered areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the

proposed alternative.

The MVSC's Proposed Alternative, to improve the safety, handicap-accessibility, environmental protection, and shooting opportunities of the MVSC Range, is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the Proposed Alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Paragraph 9.

## **PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

**Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?** No

**Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?** Individually, the proposed actions have minor impacts. However, it was determined that there are no significant or potentially significant cumulative impacts. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

### **Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:**

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, an EIS is not required.

## **PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

### **Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:**

1. Tom Fieber, 808 7th Street East, Polson, MT 59860. (406) 250-3386.
2. MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

### **EA prepared by:**

Andrea Darling, Darling Natural Resource Consulting, Montana City, MT 59634

### **Date Completed:**

April 30, 2016

### **Describe public involvement, if any:**

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the *Valley Journal, Ronan, MT* announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.